

New Blood

by The Other SM

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Summary: The possibility of many Slayers is found, and lives are at stake.

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>"Three incomingâ€¦ 12:00!" Buffy didn't need Xander to tell her the undead was heading her way. She was all ready, stake in one hand, the other one ready to fight off any vamps that evaded her. She waited until she felt they got close enough, then turned and staked one right off the bat. <br> "Don't you guys know that graduation's next week?" she asked, roundhousing one in the stomach. "Vacation is a pretty meaningless word to the undead, isn't it? All play for you guys... drink, drink, drink." By the time she finished her line, another vamp was staked, leaving the one left.

> "Seems to have slipped my mind," the remaining icky dead guy said. <br> "Seems that a shower slipped your mind too, buddy." Xander grinned to himself, proud of the Buffy-like conduct he had just shown. "Ooohâ€¦ I'm gonna have to remember that one." Buffy just rolled her eyes and staked the leftover vamp, brushing the dust off of her hands.

> She turned to Xander and smiled. "You almost got me to smile on that one," she teased. "Keep working on it." He smiled, but then frowned again. <br> "That was supposed to be a slam, wasn't it?" he asked suspiciously. Buffy shook her head innocently.

> "My last comment was purely slam-free." She bent down to pick up her slaying gear. "It was â€¦ friendly encouragement." She put her arm around Xander. "You're my comic relief," she said as she tucked the stake back into her sleeve. "Batman always needs a Robin." Xander grinned. <br> "I like the sound of that," he said, nodding his head and sticking out his chest. "Faithful sidekick extraordinairre." Buffy smiled, and the two headed out of the graveyard, having enough slayage for one night.

> "Recap at Willow's?" Xander suggested. <br> "Yeahâ€¦ I could go for those munchies we had last time. You knowâ€¦ those littleâ€¦ munchy things."

> "Ohhh I remember those! The littleâ€¦ thingsâ€¦ in the bowl." Buffy snapped her fingers. <br> "Those munchies! Let's go raid Will's munchie stash." Satisfied with their plan, the two headed to their best friend Willow's house.

> <br> Aubrey looked around the banquet hall. "Perfect ground for an attack," she thought. Aubrey was part of a very rich, very old family. They were in the top rungs of New York's social ladder, but had moved out to Los Angeles because of her father's demanding job. Aubrey was one of three kids, but was the only girl, and often felt out of place.

> "Dear, you haven't touched your pate," her mother reminded her. Aubrey realized that she had been in her own world for quite some time. "Are you alright?" <br> "I'm fine," she answered hastily. She continued to look around the room nervously.

> "Are you sure?" her mother continued to nag. Aubrey rolled her eyes and nodded her head.<br> "If I drop dead, I'll let you know," she muttered. Her mother glared at her.

> "Eat your pate," she repeated. Aubrey dug her fork aggressively into the brownish substance on her plate, causing the fork to fly out of her hand and land with a clatter on her plate. Her father angrily glowered at her<br> "Aubrey Katherine," he warned under his breath. She looked down at her plate, picked up her fork, and started poking at the brown matter on her plate again. The family ate in silence for the rest of the evening.

> <br> "Hey Will," Buffy greeted as she opened the door to her room. Xander followed, closing the door behind him. Willow was on her computer, as usual, but closed it quickly when the two entered her room.

> "More porno sites?" Xander asked jokingly. Willow blushed.<br> "Of course not!" she exclaimed. "I was researchingâ€¦ stuffâ€¦ for Gilesâ€¦ that he doesn't want me to researchâ€¦ butâ€¦"

> "I'm going to have to report you," Buffy said, laughing. Willow laughed nervously, only half assured that Buffy was just kidding. Giles didn't like her "extra-curricular" activities and was often worried that she was working with magicks too strong for her. However, her knowledge of the dark arts often helped them in their research of the next "bump in the night" of Sunnydale. <br> "What did you find tonight?" she asked, getting the group back on task.

> "The usualâ€¦ staked a few vampsâ€¦ nothing out of the norm," Buffy answered, sounding bored with the prospect of only staking a few vampires. Since the first time she had ever come in contact with the evil creatures of the night, the hunting and staking routine became pretty much a nightly event for the slayer. <br> "I came up with a new line!" Xander exclaimed. He looked thoughtful for a moment, but his face fell. "I can't remember it," he said, sounding disappointed.

> "You'll have plenty more opportunities to come up with clever one-liners," Buffy reassured him. "I won't even say anything next time so you can think of one all by yourself." Xander nodded at her, expressing his sarcastic thanks.<br> "Bring a notepad next time," he said satirically. "Maybe while you're being quiet, you can write down my witty lines so I don't have to concentrate on remembering them." He was getting a little bitter now, so Buffy decided to keep her mouth shut. Willow turned back to her computer and began surfing again. After a few minutes of silence between the three, she piped up.

> "I'm on the national watchers page," she announced. Buffy positioned herself behind Willow to get a better glance of the screen.<br> "What are you looking at?" she asked.

> "An article on the possibility of another slayer," she answered.

Buffy sighed, remembering her good friend Kendra who had been cruelly slain by the psychotic yet elegant vampire Druscilla. She shook the thought from her head and turned her thoughts back to the article on the monitor.  
<br> "Soâ€¦ what does this mean?" Buffy asked, trying to make sense of all the big words on the screen.

> "It says that there are many other would-be Slayers," she answered, "without proper guidance. They have no watchers for them." Buffy wondered what her slaying life would be like without Giles and shuddered. All that reading by herself? All thoseâ€¦ books... and pages... and words... and learning. The very thought made her quiver.  
<br> "Do they know?" she asked, trying to make sense of the article. Giles had always given her the same speech. "In every generationâ€¦ there is only one slayer." "Like, do they know that they're meant to be vampire slayers?"

> "Some do," Willow replied, unsure of what she was reading. She scrolled down a little further. "It says that some are tied very closely with it, and are aware that vampires exist without ever hearing about it from a watcher or some other mentor. They simplyâ€¦ know." This sent a shiver down Buffy's spine.  
<br> "Does that mean that they're Slayers? As in they fight the big and the bad, they look up stuff by themselves?" Buffy was surprised at this thought.

> "I don't know," Willow answered, "the article doesn't say." Xander yawned and stood up.  
<br> "I hate to break up this little study group," he said, "but I'm tired, hungry, and am going home to find my own munchies." He added an exaggerated injured sniff and dramatically left the room.

> "I forgot the munchies!" Willow exclaimed, covering her mouth.  
<br> "You'll be lucky if he talks to you tomorrow," Buffy said, an amused look on her face. She got up and headed towards the door. "I better go too," she said. "Mom's gonna get worried if I'm not home. She's convinced that I'm going to get swallowed by the Hellmouth." Willow waved goodbye, engulfed in the rest of the article.

> "We'll talk to Giles about this in the morning," she said absent-mindedly. Buffy waved goodbye, and closed the door quietly behind her.  
<br>

> "Can I help you?" Jen was sick of her job as a cashier at a Burger Kingdom right outside of Los Angeles, but her family needed whatever extra money she could bring in.  
<br> "How rare can you make the meat?" asked a gruff, tall man. He had a strange appearance, but she saw all kinds come in during her night shift, and paid no attention to this one.

> "We can only serve it well done," she answered without batting an eye. The man leaned across the counter, causing her to step back, now a bit wary of him.  
<br> "No exceptions?" he asked his voice suggestive. He hoisted himself on the counter, inducing her to back up a bit further so she was almost flat against the soda machine behind her.

> "No, I'm sorry," she answered, her voice shaky this time. "Can Iâ€¦ get you something?" He climbed over the rest of the counter and pinned her against the soda machine.  
<br> "How about a piece of you?" he asked, pressing himself against her. He pulled her head at an angle so he had a good view of her neck. She stood there, trembling.

> "I like it when the prey is scared," he teased. "It makes the kill so much moreâ€¦ oh I don't knowâ€¦ satisfying." He moved in to bite, but paused. "Hmmmâ€¦ let's have some fun with you first." He started working himself on her, undressing her slowly, prolonging the process to make it more painful for her. "Don't worry," he said. "Vampires make it so much more satisfying. The older, the more experience." Jen tried to struggle, but couldn't get past his iron grasp. He picked

her up and threw her on the counter, causing her to cry out.<br>

"Please," she begged.

> "Oh noâ€| we can't have any of that," he said, his voice in mock protest, cupping his hand over her mouth. "You can't talk." He took out a knife and held it against her throat. "Now we can do this the easy way or the hard way. Are you going to cooperate?" She nodded her head slightly, careful not to let the knife cut her throat. "Nowâ€| close up the place. I like privacy," he commanded. He put the knife back in his pocket, and she proceeded to lock the front door and turn off the main lights. "On the counter."<br> He finished removing the greasy apron she had been wearing and threw it on the ground. Moving towards her stained shirt, he continued to work himself up and down on her.

> "Don't move," he said, breathing heavily. He looked into her eyes, which were filled with fear, and laughed. She then got the first glance he could at his face, which was contorted into a demon.<br> Ten minutes later, the vampire had her hands and feet tied to two cash registers and her mouth bound with duct tape. She was fully naked and half alive, her air supply halfway cut off by the obtrusive tape.

> "I love the scent of a virgin's blood," he murmured as he removed his own clothing. "Mmmmâ€| the kill is so much better when the blood is warm with fear." He proceeded to rape her, moving himself forcefully. When he was done, she wept for her life, knowing what lay ahead. "Mmmmâ€| now for dessert." He drank her, leaving her lifeless body tied up, and left casually through the back door.<br>

> "Buffy, I'm afraid we have some bad news," Giles said solemnly as Buffy walked in the library door the next morning. He, Willow, Xander, and Oz were all sitting around the large conference table.<br> "What is it this time? Evil ugly things destroying the world? An influx of bad for me to kill while the rest of Sunnydale doesn't know about it?" Buffy sighed and set her bag down on the corner of the table, helping herself to a doughnut.

> "A young girl was killed last night," Giles continued, his face saddened.<br> "Anyone we knew?" she asked, her voice lower and more grave.

> "She was a student here," Willow cut in, "A sophomore." Buffy swallowed.<br> "Vamp?" Buffy knew the answer before she asked the question, but asked it anyway. Giles nodded, but continued.

> "She was raped," he said, his voice sadder then it was when he first broke the news. "It was the work of a vampire... but we have reason to believe..."<br> "I know," she answered, holding her hand up, "I just don't want to hear anymore. I'll be extra careful from now on, I promise."

> "Willow told me about the article you two found last night. This young girlâ€| may have been one of those such slayers." Buffy took in a sharp breath.<br> "You meanâ€| she had the strength to fight him off?"

> "I believe so. I want to research this matter further, but right now, I want you to have someone with you at all times, and for you to preferably be in a crowd. There's no telling what these demons could do to you, no matter what your skill level." Buffy nodded and collected her books.<br> "I think I have a class to get to," she said quietly. She left, followed closely by Xander, her self-appointed bodyguard. Giles sighed, and headed back to his office to begin his research.

> <br> "It's not your fault," Xander reassured her as he caught up with her in the hall. Buffy said nothing, but abruptly cut across the hall to get to her locker.

> "I could have stopped whatever got her last night," she said.

"Maybe the world would be better off with another slayer." She shook her head. "How many deaths have I not stopped over the past year?"  
"How many have you stopped? Think about it... you kill so many vampires a night. Staked. Gone. Kaput! A little less evil. Less evil makes less death." Xander returned. Buffy just shook her head again and headed off to class.

>   
Aubrey drew in a sharp breath as she watched the news from the television in her hotel room. A story came on about a young girl beaten and raped the night before.

> "I knew it," she said under her breath.   
"Honestly, Aubrey, who watches the news anymore?" She turned around from her perch on her bed to face her older brother, Andrew.

> "People who don't spend their time kissing the feet of dad's business partners," Aubrey answered stubbornly.   
"It's called the web," he returned. "Look it up." With that, he left the room, slamming the door behind him. She turned her attention back to the television to catch any other important parts of the newscast.

> "This isn't the first mysterious death in Sunnydale," the announcer read on. "Enigmatic events are always happening. We'll keep you up to date with exclusive coverage of this tragic tale." Aubrey disgustedly turned the news off. How could someone deliver this news with a smile?   
"Aubrey," she heard her mother calling from the other room of their hotel suite. "It's time to go." The family was going to look for houses in the surrounding suburbs, something that Aubrey was not looking forward to. "Are you dressed yet?"

> "Almost," she replied, hopping up out of bed. She, of course, was still in her pajamas. "I'll be right there!" She ran over to her suitcase and started pulling out clothes. Once she was satisfied with her choice, she ran her fingers through her hair in front of the mirror and was out the door.

> "And she tried to put up a fight," said the vampire to another. "But I was too strong for her. She was strong, I was stronger." He sounded quite pleased with himself.   
"You still have much work to do," said a voice from behind him. Both vamps turned around quickly to face the owner of the voice. "The oldest oneâ€| the one with the watcherâ€| she's a trick." The voice belonged to none other than Spike, a tall, blonde vampire who had many encounters with Buffy and her crew before.

> "Who are you?" asked one of the vampires.   
"Your competition." With that, Spike left, confident that he had conveyed his message. He had no time to stay, anyway. He had much work to do deeper into the sewers of Sunnydale.

>   
"Find anything yet?" asked Buffy, returning to the library for her free period.

> "Yes," Giles responded, wiping his glasses with a handkerchief.

"The possibility of more slayers is quiteâ€| quiteâ€|"

"Possible?" Buffy suggested, trying to hurry the conversation.

> "Yes," Giles answered. "A slayer without guidance is quite a hazard, especially one who knows of her calling."   
"Others know, but don't know what to do about it," Willow finished for him, having just entered the conversation. "What, I can't do a little research myself?" she asked when she received questioning stares from her friends.

> "Well, we're going to need you to do some more," Giles continued, "on that littleâ€| hell machine of yours." Of course, he was referring to the computer that Willow spent so much of her time on. "See if you can find anyone who claims to fight vampires. Check themâ€| see if they aren't simply bluffing. I want to keep them as safe as possible." Willow nodded and promptly opened her portable PC.   
"I'm on it," she said cheerfully.

> "Buffy, I want you to double your hunting time," Giles said, turning to the Slayer. "Expand your groundsâ€¦ get as much as you can in one night." Buffy nodded her head. "And if you run into anyone elseâ€¦ ermâ€¦ hunting vampiresâ€¦ keep them safe." She nodded again.  
> "I won't let this happen to anyone else," she said, solemnly. Xander then raised his hand. Giles looked at him questioningly, but addressed him.  
> "Yes Xander?" he asked.   
> "What do you want me to do?" he questioned. Giles thought for a moment, but came up with nothing.  
> "You can be my assistant," Willow piped up from behind her computer. "Take notes." Xander's shoulders slumped at the prospect of note-taking, but obeyed.  
> "That's me, trusty assistant guy," he said non-enthusiastically. The group got going on their research, each starting their respective tasks. They all knew they were in for a long night.  
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> "Sunnydale offers a wonderful school system," the realtor began from the front seat of her car. "There are scattered private schools, but the public school is thought of highly throughout the country." Aubrey tuned out of the conversation and considered her luck. She was moving to the rumored supernatural capital of the world! Getting there from Los Angeles was a bit of a drive on the highway, but she had plenty to think about.  
> "Did you hear that, Aubrey? They have a wonderful country club," her mother said excitedly from her seat next to the realtor. Aubrey looked out the window again, not answering her mother. "Did you hear me, dear? The country clubâ€¦"   
> "Yes mother, that's great," answered Aubrey quickly. Defeated in the front seat, her mother continued to listen to the endless droll of the realtor, allowing Aubrey to go back to her own thoughts.  
> About an hour later, they passed a green sign that read Welcome to Sunnydale.  
> "They do too!" Meghan Lynch, a typical third grader at Sunnydale Elementary. Her red pigtails were shaking fiercely as she argued with her best friend, Kate Corregan.   
> "They do not," Kate retorted. The two exchanged this small battle until the teacher rounded up her students to come inside.  
> As the class marched back into the classroom, Kate and Meghan continued their argument.   
> "If they existed, we would have gotten eaten already," Kate argued.  
> "Other people do," Meghan corrected. "Not us."   
> "Nuh uhhhh," Kate returned, sticking her tongue out at Meghan. The two had found their seats in the neat little rows of desks, but continued to talk. "If they're real," Kate continued, whispering now, "How come I never saw one?"  
> "Because you're not allowed out at night," Meghan said. "'Cause Sunnydale isn't safe at night. 'Cause of the vampires." Kate just shook her head again and directed her attention to the teacher. "When you get eaten," Meghan whispered, "You'll believe me." The two ended the argument for then, planning to pick it up after class was over.  
> Willow sensed a presence in the room and looked up from her computer. A slender, blonde girl, who looked about 15, was standing in the doorway.  
> "Can I help you?" she asked, her voice a bit precarious. Normal people never came in the library.  
> "I'mâ€¦ looking for Buffy," the girl said without introducing herself. Willow looked around, trying to find Giles, but was unsuccessful.  
> "I think she's got classes now," Willow answered. "Do you know her?"  
> "I've heard about her," the girl answered. "I'll wait until she comes back."  
> "Umâ€¦ umâ€¦ ok," Willow stuttered, never really

able to speak up for herself to strangers.

> "Mr. Giles!" the girl exclaimed, standing up as Giles entered the room. He looked at her oddly.<br> "Can I help you?" he asked, playing the part of stuffy English librarian again.

> "I've heard so much about you and Buffy," she said excitedly. "I've read your articles on the Internet.<br> "Those things actually got published?" he asked, then looked at Willow, who quickly turned back to her computer, pretending not to hear the conversation.

> "Yes, and they're wonderful!" she exclaimed. "I wondered if I could meet Buffy."<br> "Iâ€| umâ€| wellâ€| I supposeâ€| if you can wait for her to come back from class," Giles said reluctantly, while studying the girl.

> "I believe," she said, "that you know some things thatâ€| may be of interest of me," she said, glancing at Willow. "Perhaps we could talk someplace private." Before Giles could ask for a further explanation, a middle-aged woman waltzed into the library.<br> "Aubrey, dear, there you are," she sang. "It's time to go. I see that you've madeâ€|" she glanced at Willow, her face buried in a computer, and Giles, somewhat flustered, "friends."

> "Rupert Giles," Giles offered his hand to Aubrey's mother, and she shook it gingerly.<br> "AnneMarie Walsh, I'm Aubrey's mother, and it's time for both of us to go." She took Aubrey's hand and quickly led her out of the library.

> Just as Aubrey and Mrs. Walsh left, Buffy entered the library with an armload of books.<br> "Whoâ€|?" she asked, her voice trailing off at the end. She was as surprised as Willow was that some "outsiders" had come into the library.

> "I believe that is one of the slayers," Giles said. "Her mother took her before she could tell me anything."<br> "How'd she know about you? About us?" Giles said nothing, but looked at Willow and sighed.

> "They needed to be published!" she protested. "I put them on WatcherWeb!"<br> "Well, at least someone liked them," he said, a bit of pride in his voice.

> "OK, so what's with the hellish activity today?" Buffy asked.<br> "What sort of hellish activity? Things have been quiet here all day," Giles asked, interested now.

> "The spidey sense is back again," Buffy said. She was referring to the sense that, as the slayer, she possessed to perceive when creepy crawlies were near her. She very rarely got this feeling during the day, and was always a bit wigged when she felt it.<br> "You're sure it wasâ€| this sense," Giles asked cautiously.

> "Could there be a 'very dark power' in Sunnydale?" she asked, imitating Kendra's famous line.<br> "There's always evil lurking in Sunnydale," Giles reminded her. "Perhaps your skills are advancing, and you must sharpen them to do your bidding." His thoughts wandered to this exciting prospect. Anything that sounded boring to Buffy was almost always extra fun for Giles. "Be on the lookout for anything, um, unusual during your hunt tonight, however. Just to be safe." Buffy saluted him jokingly and left the library in search of some nourishment.

> <br> The bell rang at Sunnydale Elementary, and kids ran out of the building to fill the awaiting buses. Kate and Meghan, however, lagged behind.

> "I'll show you where they are," Meghan said to Kate, whose face turned pale.<br> "Vampiresâ€| don't come out in the daytime stupid," Kate said, her voice a little shaky.

> "They live in the sewer," Meghan replied, exasperated at her friend's newfound fear. "Are you coming or not?"<br> "No," Kate replied firmly. Meghan sighed and grabbed her hand.

> "Come on," she urged. "I promise we won't get too close."<br>  
> "So&eacute; you want to bag the Slayer," Spike said to the group of vampires crowded around him. He was answered with nodding heads and a few rounds of "yes". <br> "Spike?" there was a new voice in the room. Spike looked around, and laid his eyes on his love, Druscilla.  
> "Hello pet," he said affectionately. "Where have you been traipsing around?"<br> "Vienna has wonderful children," she said whimsically. "They taste like chocolate."  
> "We're going to bag the Slayer, Dru. That will be the freshest meat you have ever laid your eyes on." Druscilla laughed and laid her head on Spike's arm.<br> "The children are coming, Spike. The children are coming."  
> <br> "Here I am, faithful assistant person," Xander said as he entered the library.  
> "I have a job for you already," Willow said as she looked up from her computer. "Take notes on this stuff." Xander looked at the computer screen and sighed. <br> "That's a lot of stuff," he said, taking paper and a pen out of his messenger bag.  
> "It's important stuff," she replied, urging him to start working. "There's more."<br> "More?" Xander gulped. This was going to be a long afternoon. The two got to work, one typing, the other writing.

> A few minutes later, the bell rang. Sounds of the school coming to life, excited to go home, echoed outside the library. Buffy entered, less books in her arms this time.<br> "Where's Giles?" she asked, looking around.  
> "Hello to you too," Xander replied sarcastically.<br> "Where's Giles?" she repeated, a little more forcefully this time. Xander shrugged his shoulders, but faithful Giles emerged from his office before another word was said.  
> "You rang?" he asked.<br> "Spike's back," she answered, her voice monotone.  
> "Your 'spidey sense?'" Giles was always wary when Buffy got a "feeling" about something. Not that it was usually wrong, but he always wanted hard facts.<br> "No, this one jumped up and bit me in the ass," she replied, her voice still a bit quivery. She held up a Polaroid of two little girls who looked about nine, one with brown hair and the other with red.  
> "Little Buffy and Willow? This could be tasty," Buffy read from the bottom of the picture. "Best wishes, Spike." She shivered. "I'm going to find them.<br> "Wait, Buffy," Giles pleaded with her. "I'm sure it's a trap."  
> "Never trust your gut feeling," Buffy said, imitating him. "This," she said, holding up the picture, "is a fact, and I need to save those little girls." With that, she ran out of the library, retrieving Mr. Pointy from the counter before she left. Giles just shook his head and prayed to himself that Buffy wouldn't jump into anything she couldn't handle.<br>  
> "Aubrey, you and your brothers can explore town a bit while I look at some more houses. Don't run far, and stay together." She slipped them each a fifty. "Don't spend it all," she warned, knowing they would anyway. The three headed off, together for now.<br> "Wow, who's that?" her older brother, Andrew, said with admiration at the blonde that was running across the field. Aubrey looked at her, and realized she was holding a stake in her hand. She started running to catch up with her.  
> "Buffy!" she yelled. Buffy was taken by surprise at this stranger. She slowed down and looked at her.<br> "What?" she asked, out of breath.  
> "I know who you are," she said. <br> "Well, I wish I could say the



same. But I really have to go right now." Buffy looked towards the entrance to the graveyard, where a sewer grate was so conveniently placed.

> "The graveyard? I've heard so much about it. Please take me. I was in to see Giles earlier, but my mother made me leave," she said, sounding a little more than annoyed with her mother.<br> "You're theâ€|" Buffy slapped her forehead. "I really gotta go."

> "Please, I can help," Aubrey protested. Buffy looked from her to the sewer a few times. <br> "Come with me," she said, knowing that it wasn't the best plan.

> "Really?" Aubrey bounced with delight as she pulled a stake from her sleeve.<br> "Well at least you came prepared," Buffy muttered under her breath. Aubrey yelled to her brothers to stay put, and the two Slayers were off and running to the sewer again.

> <br> "Something's coming, Spike. Somethingâ€| ooooh something. Powerful." Druscilla held her head and started to sing.

> "It's alright, pet. Tell daddy what you see." He didn't need her to interpret, however, when Buffy and some new accomplice came in, crashing their party.<br> "I thought I told you to get gone," Buffy said, glaring at Spike. "Where are they?"

> "Where are who?" Spike asked, toying with her. "I haven't the slightest idea what you're talking about." The rest of his crew started to advance on the two. Buffy picked off the first few, causing the remaining six to become wary of their job, but advanced anyway. One headed towards Aubrey, who looked a little scared.<br> "Hey, buddy, over here," Buffy yelled, but the vampire ignored her and grabbed Aubrey. She grinned at him and kicked him in the stomach, causing him to double over. Before he could re-position himself, she sent a slew of kicks at him. He finally stood up, and she staked him on the spot.

> "Well done," Spike congratulated, "But can you handle me?" He made his way up to her, and she was ready to fight. Every time he got close to her, she kicked him. "Now, doll, if you want to go around, fine. But you're going to lose." He flung himself at her, knocking her to the ground. Buffy tried to stop him, but was held back by the leftover vampires that had been lurking in the corner.<br> "You're cute," Spike teased, moving in for the kill.

> "I'm cuter than cute," she replied, grinning. "If you like nightmares." She threw him off, causing him to land on his back, and stood, one foot on top of him. "We can do this the easy way, or the hard way. I'm not gonna stake youâ€| in fact, I kinda like you. You're cute. But I like little girls betterâ€| live girls, mind you. Now you've heard of the rich, bratty type. If I don't get what I want, I get angry. Which way are we going to go?" Spike's face turned from evil to defeated.<br> "Let them go," he instructed his henchmen. They released Buffy and disappeared into a back room, emerging with the two little girls, scared but unharmed.

> "I told you," the red-haired one said to the brown haired one, who stuck her tongue out at her friend.<br> "Well, here are your prizes," Spike said reluctantly.

> "Get gone," Buffy said, glaring at him. She, Aubrey, and the two little girls left the same way Buffy and Aubrey had come in. Once in broad daylight, Buffy knelt down in front of the two little girls.<br> "Are you guys OK?" she asked. The two little girls nodded, both very shaken of the day's events. "Let's get you guys home." Buffy took each one of them by the hand. "Do you know how to get to your house from here?" They both nodded and pulled her in different directions.

> "I can get home by myself," said the red-haired girl. She let go of Buffy's hand and started walking. "I'll be OK." Buffy looked

helplessly at Aubrey. She was never good with the whole little kid thing. Aubrey started walking to catch up with her.<br> "Mind a little company?" she asked, quickly falling in step. Buffy was satisfied, but then realized that she didn't have any way to contact Aubrey later.

> "Aubrey!" she yelled. The younger slayer responded and turned around. "I need a phone number or something!" Aubrey searched her pockets for something to write with, but found nothing.<br> "Do you have something to write it down on?" Buffy also came up with nothing. They looked to the two girls, who both had shocked looks on their faces.

> "Our backpacks!" exclaimed the brown-haired girl. "Meghan, this is all your fault." <br> "Where are they?" asked Buffy, looking at her watch. It was getting kind of late, and Giles would get worried if she didn't report back before her normal patrol time.

> "My books!" exclaimed Meghan. Buffy looked at the small girl strangely. She didn't think any third grader cared that much about books.<br> "I'm sure your teacher will... understand," Buffy stuttered. The red pigtails shook.

> "Not school books," she said fearfully. "They were vampire books." Buffy and Aubrey exchanged worried glances. <br> "I'll get them back for you, I promise," Buffy said as she looked at the sky. It was almost sundown.

> "Come on Meghan, let's get you home before your mom and dad worry," Aubrey said. "Buffy, I'll try to call you somehow tomorrow... leave a message with the school maybe." With that, the two were gone down the street, trying to make it home before dark.<br>

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End  
file.